

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of load balancing messages to servers of a server farm, by a load balancer, comprising:

configuring the load balancer with information ~~on the~~ specifying a pre-assignment of different groups of session ID values which may be assigned by at least one to respective ones of the servers, each of said servers being operative to assign session ID values from its associated one of the pre-assigned groups to sessions handled by that server;

determining, by the load balancer, for at least some client messages including a non-empty session ID field, which server or sub-group of servers is associated with the ID in the ID field, responsive to the configured information; and

selecting, by the load balancer, a server to receive each of the at least some client messages, at least partially responsive to the determination.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein configuring the load balancer comprises managing a table which lists for at least one of the servers or sub-groups of servers a range of values from which the server may assign session IDs.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein configuring the load balancer comprises managing a table which lists for at least one of the servers or sub-groups of servers, one or more values of a sub-set of the bits of session IDs associated with the server.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein configuring the load balancer comprises providing a function which correlates between session IDs and the server which assigned the session ID.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 1, comprising configuring at least one of the servers with a rule on the session ID values it may assign to sessions.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein configuring the load balancer comprises configuring through a user interface, which configures both the load balancer and at least one of the servers responsive to user instructions.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein configuring the load balancer comprises configuring automatically by a module running on the load balancer, which transmits configuration instructions to at least one of the servers.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 7, wherein configuring automatically by the load balancer comprises configuring responsive to input received from the at least one of the servers.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein configuring at least one of the servers comprises configuring substantially all the servers in the farm with respective sub-groups of allowed session IDs which do not include common session IDs.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein at least some of a plurality of available session IDs are not assigned to any of the servers.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein configuring substantially all the servers comprises assigning substantially a same number of session IDs to each of the servers.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 9, wherein configuring substantially all the servers comprises assigning different numbers of session IDs to at least two of the servers.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein configuring the load balancer comprises configuring by a system manager.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein selecting a server to receive a client message comprises selecting a server which assigned the session ID of the message.

15. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein selecting a server to receive a client message comprises selecting a server in a sub-group of servers which shares information with a server which assigned the session ID of the message.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the client messages comprise SSL client messages.

17. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the session ID values comprise application layer ID values.

18. (Original) A method according to claim 1, additionally comprising managing a list of ID values actually assigned by one or more servers and determining, by the load balancer, for at least some client messages including a non-empty session ID field, which server or sub-group of servers is associated with the ID in the ID field, responsive to the managed list.

19. (Currently amended) A load balancer, comprising:

a memory unit adapted to store configured information on specifying a pre-assignment of different groups of session ID values which may be assigned by at least one to respective ones of the servers, each of said servers being operative to assign session ID values from its associated one of the pre-assigned groups to sessions handled by that server;

an input interface adapted to receive client messages; and

a load balancing unit which is adapted to select a server to receive at least one of the client messages, at least partially responsive to the contents of the memory unit, and to forward the at least one of the client messages to the selected server.

20. (Original) A load balancer according to claim 19, comprising a configuration module adapted to store the configured information in the memory unit.

21. (Original) A load balancer according to claim 20, wherein the configuration module is adapted to generate instructions directed to one or more servers on the session ID values they may use.

22. (Original) A load balancer according to claim 19, wherein the load balancing unit comprises a comparator adapted to compare at least a portion of at least one of the fields of received client messages to information stored in the memory unit.